



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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Secretary Maynard Announces New Inmate Release Policy

***Those without home plans in four westernmost counties
will be released from Baltimore***

TOWSON, MD (August 28, 2007)---In an effort to ensure that released inmates without ties to Western Maryland do not remain there when their home plan indicates a residence elsewhere, the Maryland Division of Correction has initiated a new policy. Effective immediately, inmates from prisons in Hagerstown and Cumberland will be transported to Baltimore prior to their release unless they have set-up a home plan in the four westernmost counties: Frederick, Washington, Allegany, and Garrett.

The change in release policy, supported by Governor Martin O'Malley, was announced today by Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Secretary Gary Maynard and Acting Commissioner of Correction J. Michael Stouffer, who spoke to a group of local community leaders in Hagerstown.

"Public safety is always our top priority," says Governor O'Malley. "Secretary Maynard and I are aware of the concerns here in Hagerstown, and we've worked hard to address them."

Adds Secretary Maynard: "We've always tried to be a good neighbor. This will further demonstrate our commitment to this community."

J. Michael Stouffer, Acting Commissioner of the Maryland Division of Correction and a lifelong Washington County resident, signed the new policy on August 27.

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Some Hagerstown leaders and citizens have long expressed concern that many ex-inmates were staying in the area after getting out of prison. But an exhaustive DPSCS study of inmates released in the first half of 2007 seems to show otherwise. That study, just completed and announced by Secretary Maynard today, shows that of 622 inmates released from Hagerstown and Cumberland prisons to the supervision of the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation between January and June of 2007, only eight who were not sentenced in Washington County remained there after their release from prison. Six of those eight work jobs that began before their release; the other two have family in the area.

Furthermore, of the 86 inmates who were under no obligation to report to Parole and Probation agents, only one without ties to Hagerstown prior to sentencing remained in that area after his release from prison, according to home plans examined in the same DPSCS study.

The study also examined inmate-by-inmate files for those who were sentenced specifically in the Baltimore-Washington area. During the period of January through June of this year, only four of the 272 inmates who had been sentenced in Baltimore City were supervised by Parole and Probation agents in Washington County. Three ex-inmates sentenced in Montgomery County remained under Parole and Probation supervision in Washington County.

Secretary Maynard and Acting Commissioner Stouffer also reiterated the Secretary's intention to quadruple the number of inmates who work before they are out of prison, either in jobs or community partnerships. This reduces idle time, therefore increasing the safety for correctional staff; it also increases the likelihood that ex-offenders will be employable upon release.

The Secretary and Acting Commissioner also praised the local correctional workforce, which supervises more than six thousand inmates in three medium-security prisons, and the Parole and Probation agents, who oversee community supervision for ex-offenders who live in Washington County.

The Maryland Division of Correction operates Roxbury Correctional Institution, the Maryland Correctional Training Center, and the Maryland Correctional Institution-Hagerstown on Roxbury Road five miles south of Hagerstown.

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services is the parent agency for both the Division of Correction, whose nearly eight thousand employees oversee approximately 23, 000 inmates; and the Division of Parole and Probation, whose dedicated agents supervise more than 67,000 people in communities all over the state.

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